

pendence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8437 of October 9, 2009

Columbus Day, 2009

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

More than 500 years have passed since Christopher Columbus set sail across the Atlantic Ocean in a bold attempt to expand human understanding of the known world. His voyage radically altered the course of history and changed our world forever. Many generations later, that same spirit of exploration inspires Americans to pursue brave new frontiers in business, science, and technology. Today, we reflect on the transformation of North America from a land of boundless opportunity to the modern communities of the 21st century.

Born in Genoa, Italy, Christopher Columbus' journey aboard three Spanish ships revealed a new land for many European nations whose people would later flock to our shores in search of prosperity and freedom. These immigrants joined many thriving indigenous communities who suffered great hardships as a result of the changes to the land they inhabited. Although their competing ways of life were initially at odds, over time, the "New World" became a culturally and ethnically diverse place where we now enjoy the free exchange of ideas and democratic self-governance. Tribal communities continue to strengthen our Nation through their rich heritage and unique identity.

Columbus inspired generations of men and women to search out the farthest reaches of the world. From the coasts of Newfoundland to the Gulf of Mexico, explorers of Italian descent have directly influenced the growth of North America. Their dedication to our country has helped lay the foundation on which America was built. Today, Italian Americans continue to contribute immeasurably to the identity of our Nation, as role models, leaders, innovators, and committed public servants. From the boardroom to the classroom, they are prominent in every facet of American life.

In commemoration of Christopher Columbus' historic exploration 517 years ago, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934 (48 Stat. 657), and an Act of June 28, 1968 (82 Stat. 250), has requested that the President proclaim the second Monday of October of each year as "Columbus Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 12, 2009, as Columbus Day. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Inde-

pendence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8438 of October 9, 2009

General Pulaski Memorial Day, 2009

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Each year on this day, Americans pause to remember a patriot and champion of liberty who fought valiantly for the freedom of our Nation. During our struggle for independence, General Casimir Pulaski displayed heroic leadership and ultimately sacrificed his life in service to our country. His commitment to liberty remains an inspiration to us today, 230 years later, and it serves as a reflection of the many contributions Polish Americans have made to our national identity.

Born in Poland in 1745, Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski witnessed the occupation of Poland by foreign troops during his youth. He joined the struggle for Polish independence in 1768, fighting alongside his father with unwavering determination. Despite the tremendous courage of Pulaski and his compatriots, the foreign forces prevailed and Poland was divided among three of its neighbors. The young Casimir Pulaski was exiled, and, while in Paris, met America's envoy to France, Benjamin Franklin, and learned of our nascent quest for independence.

Arriving in America during the summer of 1777, General Pulaski quickly earned a commission and led his troops with admirable skill in a number of important campaigns. He would eventually become known as the "Father of the American Cavalry." In 1779, Pulaski was mortally wounded during the siege of Savannah while trying to rally his troops under heavy enemy fire. Before laying down his life for the United States, this Polish and American hero had earned a reputation for his idealism and his courageous spirit.

Pulaski's ideals live on today in the many Polish-American communities across the country. These neighborhoods continue to celebrate Polish culture, while adding immeasurably to our national identity. Their contributions have expanded our collective knowledge, pushing the boundaries of science, business, and the arts. With each passing year, the cooperation between the United States and Poland grows, supported by the dedication and commitment of Polish Americans to our shared history. Today, as we remember General Pulaski, we celebrate our strong friendship with Poland, and honor those Americans of Polish heritage.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Sunday, October 11, 2009, as General Pulaski Memorial Day. I encourage all Americans to commemorate this occasion with appropriate programs and activities paying tribute to Casimir Pulaski and honoring all those who defend the freedom of our great Nation.